



# Navigations



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## Shiftworking and Maintaining Relationships

The effects of shiftworking are many and may include sleep loss, excessive stress, and unhealthy eating habits. Often overlooked, another serious result of working late-night/early-morning shifts can be frustration and stress on the shiftworker's home and social life. Employees working non-traditional work hours often complain of difficulty in maintaining relationships, balancing parenting with sleep and work hours, accomplishing household chores, and finding time for out-of-work activities or for time with a partner. In addition, family members or friends of shiftworkers may be left feeling lonely or disconnected. Here are some tips on how shiftworkers can minimize the strain on family and social relationships:

- **Schedule family meetings.** Family meetings are an excellent way of bringing everyone together for conversations and quality time. It is important to remember that these meetings should be a time for open conversation. Each person involved should feel comfortable voicing his or her frustrations without judgement. Sometimes, just talking about the issue without reaching a specific conclusion can go a long way.
- **Talk about issues right away.** Letting frustrations sit without discussion will only make the problem worse and may threaten family/social relationships. Whether you are a shiftworker or the family/friend of a shiftworker, talking and open communication is the best way to address any issue.
- **Pin-point a date for fun activities.** Using time off to schedule a day in the park with the kids, a "date" with your partner, or an afternoon lunch with friends can ensure that personal relationships and interests are not placed on the backburner.
- **Assign a weekly date to just relax or talk with your partner.** The day and/or time may change each week, but having a time set aside for unwinding with a loved one can maintain a sense of togetherness. *(continued on page 2)*

**Need Worklife Information Fast?**  
e-mail or call your Worklife Advisor at  
(866) NOAAWLC or [worklife.center@noaa.gov](mailto:worklife.center@noaa.gov)

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## Facts for New NOAA Employees

*Did you know that...*

- In conjunction with NIH, NOAA has a Recreation and Welfare committee that organizes regular events and activities for all NOAA employees? Upcoming trips include a day in Niagara Falls July 16, a trip to Cape Cod July 14-18 and a trip to Vermont August 11-15. For more information call John Frankenburg at 703-642-9260.
- NOAA has many social clubs that you can join to meet fellow employees while enjoying a favorite activity? Some of these clubs include Badminton, Theatre, Bicycle, Camera, Line Dancing, Golf, Running, Tennis, Yoga, Softball, and Ski clubs. For more information or to propose a new club or activity visit <http://www.recgov.org/r&w/clubs.html>.
- NOAA produces T-shirts, sweatshirts, mugs, hats, pens, pins, umbrellas, jackets, bags, and coasters all with the NOAA logo? To order any of these items call 301-713-0283.
- NOAA hosts regular Health Benefits seminars, brownbag seminars on various topics, a blood drive, and many more events? For more information and for schedules visit the Human Resources department Web site at <http://www.recgov.org/r&w/clubs.html>.
- NOAA has a dispute resolution program that offers crisis counseling, mediation, and workshops? For more information visit their Web site at <http://www.adr.noaa.gov/> or contact Mary Hoagland at 206-526-6171, [Mary.B.Hoagland@noaa.gov](mailto:Mary.B.Hoagland@noaa.gov).
- In addition to the Worklife Center, NOAA offers EAP services to help with life issues such as stress, counseling needs, relationships, substance abuse, and family issues? To contact EAP, call 1-877-234-5151 or visit their Web site at <http://www.lifeworks.com>.

## Summer Safety Quiz

1. A power lawn mower should be turned off and the spark plug disconnected before any work is done on it.
  - a) TRUE
  - b) FALSE
2. When using insecticides, pesticides and weed killers, you should:
  - a) Buy products with child-resistant packaging when available
  - b) Store and lock up all toxic substances out of the reach of children
  - c) Put materials away as soon as you are through using them
  - d) All of the above
3. You can use gasoline in place of lighter fluid when starting your charcoal grill.
  - a) TRUE
  - b) FALSE
4. All of the following are true about swimming pools, except:
  - a) Approximately 10,000 people are treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries associated with in-ground swimming pools
  - b) The greatest number of pool related injuries are a result of falls on slippery surfaces surrounding the pool
  - c) Rescue and first aid equipment should be kept near swimming pools
  - d) Keeping electrical appliances, such as radios, away from the pool will reduce hazards of electric shock
  - e) Tall fences should be built around all sides of a pool
5. Campfires should be built several yards away from a tent and extinguished well before retiring for the night.
  - a) TRUE
  - b) FALSE

See page 3 for answers.

## Shiftworking and Maintaining Relationships (cont.)

- **Use a family bulletin or message board.** Bulletin boards allow family members to post special notes, drawings, pictures, or schoolwork, which help the family to retain a feeling of connection. This can also be a way to state a simple, "I miss you", which may too often go without saying.
- **Purchase a camera or video recorder.** Items such as these allow all family/social events to be documented and saved so that a shiftworker can feel that he/she is a part of all activities even if he/she is not physically present. Even better, watching the tapes or viewing the pictures can be done together.
- **Maintain security.** A shiftworker's partner and/or children may often feel lonely or fearful at night. Some ways to combat this fear is to install a security system or even to get a dog. In addition, shiftworkers should make sure that family members can reach them by phone at all times or if that's not possible, arrange a regular time to call home.
- **Make friends with other non-traditional workers.** Creating a circle of friends who understand and work on a similarly unusual schedule can allow you more flexibility and involvement in social activities and can provide a support network.

Source: *Working Nights Health and Safety Guide*. For more information on this or other issues related to shiftworking visit <http://www.circadian.com>.

## A Thought to Ponder...Sleep In!

When was the last time you slept to your heart's content? What would you give for the time off to sleep in? The fresh face of a good night's rest is in today's look of success. Eight hours of sleep are harder to come by than a luxury car or a big house. What is it that we think we get more of by sleeping less? Working to the point of exhaustion makes us prone to mistakes as well as less productive. We've become like the Red Queen in Wonderland who tells Alice she is running as fast as she can just to stay in place. Instead, as writer Edward Helmore suggests, we should emulate someone like Albert Einstein who needed ten hours of sleep a night while he was working out the revolutionary concepts of quantum physics and space/time relativity.

*Excerpt taken from Life is Not Work, Work is Not Life by Robert K. Johnston & J. Walker Smith. You can find this book, along with many others on balancing work and personal life in the Worklife Center Resource Library. For more information, contact your Worklife Advisor at 866-NOAAWLC.*

## Readers Write In! ... on Adoption and Quiet Time

Last month's newsletter got a lot of attention. Many readers wrote in sharing their feedback and ideas to enhance Navigations further. Here's what some had to say:

Lee Weinberger, a parent of a now 3 year old who was adopted from Russia in November 2000, had this to say,

*One more helpful link that you might have wanted to add [to the **International Adoption** article] is <http://www.eeadopt.org> for links and information on those who are interested in adopting from an Eastern Europe country (including any countries that had been part of the former Soviet Union). There was a change in the citizenship laws as of February 28, 2001. In cases in which the foreign adoption is final and when the child was seen by all of their parent(s) before their adoption was finalized in the foreign country, the child automatically becomes a United States citizen upon passing through immigration at their point of landing in the United States. [Additionally], new regulations allow the usage of sick leave for purposes of adoption travel and adoption related activities. (Even if the trips take several weeks)*

Thanks, Lee for this information and a new resource! To further clarify, a child will be eligible for U.S. citizenship either upon entry into the U.S. **or** upon completing the adoption after arrival.

Several other readers wrote in response to the **Insight Meditation** article contributed by Ruby Cubano. Some offered suggestions on how they reduce stress in their own lives.

Dave Carpenter shared a stress relieving technique that works for him,

*There is a commonly used technique for relieving stress that is based on the Christian faith called a "quiet time" in which one meditates on the Bible. A brief article giving an example of this kind of stress reliever is on the Web at: <http://www.renewingtheheart.com/devo/a0000373.html>.*

Thanks for the idea Dave!

If you have ideas, suggestions or comments for Navigations, we want to hear from you. Contact Barbara Marshall-Bailey or the Worklife Center to share your experiences, comments, and resources.

## Support Group Update: NOAA's New Employees Are Responding!

In the May issue of the Navigations newsletter, the NOAA Worklife Center began solicitations for a support group for our new, young employees at NOAA. Your response has been overwhelming and the support group for our "recent grads" is well underway. This group is just one in a series of groups we will be forming for new NOAA employees.

Due to popular request, our next addition to this series will be a support group for the older generation NOAA employees. If you're an older employee looking for fellow employees with similar interests or just want to get to know some new co-workers this may be the group for you! For anyone interested in becoming part of either group or if you have suggestions for our new employees, please contact Bernadette Anderson at [bernadette.m.anderson@noaa.gov](mailto:bernadette.m.anderson@noaa.gov) or 301-713-1966 x 129.

## Answers to Quiz

1. **A - TRUE** Every year operators of power mowers receive severe cuts and amputations when they try to clear the discharge chute of grass clippings and other debris or adjust the machine while it is still operating. The mower should be turned off, and the spark plug should be disconnected.
2. **D - All of the above** All of these should be exercised when working with toxic substances. Tragic accidental poisonings can occur as a result of storing household and garden products under a sink or in an open shed.
3. **B - FALSE** Gasoline should never be used in place of charcoal lighter fluid. Additionally, lighter fluid should not be reapplied after the fire has started as the flames can ignite the vapors and travel up to the can causing an explosion.
4. **A - Approximately 10,000 people are treated in hospital emergency rooms** Actually, over 40,000 people are treated in ERs around the country for pool related injuries. Pool owners should be especially careful in reducing the amount of potential hazards surrounding their pools.
5. **A - TRUE** Campers should be aware that most tents burn and some are very flammable. When purchasing a tent, consumers should look for flame retardant or flame resistant models.

## Selecting the Right Courses

As your teen schedules classes for next year, you both need to keep an eye toward college -- even if it feels like long way off. It's never too early to think about how the right classes can help a student get into college. College Board.com offers this advice to high school students.

Be sure to have at least four, preferably five, solid academic courses on your schedule. Check out these general guidelines -- they apply whether you're interested in a four-year, junior, or community college:

### **Algebra and geometry**

Don't leave high school without them. They give you the skills you need to do well on college entrance exams, in college math classes, and in your future career. If you take them early on, you'll have time to enroll in chemistry, physics, and advanced math courses. Good grades in these kinds of tough courses can be a big plus.

### **English**

Take English every year. Traditional English courses such as American and English literature help you improve your writing skills, reading comprehension, and vocabulary.

### **Science**

Science is another academic building block. Six semesters are recommended, including two in biology, two in chemistry and/or physics, and two in earth/space sciences, advanced biology, advanced chemistry, or physics.

### **History and geography**

Together with math and English, history and geography make up the core of your academic classes. They help you better understand our society and societies around the world.

### **Languages**

Taking a foreign language shows colleges that you're willing to stretch beyond the basics. Many colleges require that you study a foreign language for at least two years, and some prefer more.

### **Advanced Placement (AP®)**

Take AP courses if they're available in your school. They let you try college-level work and master valuable skills. They also show colleges that you've tackled college-level material and deserve credit and/or advanced placement for meeting that challenge.

### **Computer science**

Basic computer skills are essential, and more and more college courses and jobs require at least a basic knowledge of computers. Computer skills also can help you do research and schoolwork better and faster.

### **The arts**

Arts courses broaden your understanding and appreciation of the world and develop your skills to see differences, figure out patterns, and examine how you make decisions. Research indicates that students who participate in the arts often do better in school and on standardized tests.

### **Don't wait until high school to take college prep classes**

Sure, everyone knows that high school courses and grades count for admission to college, but keep in mind that high school courses rely on information gained before high school. If you don't plan ahead and take the right courses before high school, you may have a tougher time completing everything that's recommended.

For additional college entry related tips, including planning for college, taking college entry tests, finding the right college, getting into college, and paying for college, visit <http://www.collegeboard.com/>.

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